

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4797

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS EC

SUBJECT: NEW HEAD OF ECUADOREAN NAVY REQUESTS SHIPS, TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ADMIRAL POVEDA, NEW CNO OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVY, TOLD ME JUNE 27 THAT HE HAS TAKEN THE DECISION TO REORIENT THE ECUADOREAN NAVY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. HE REQUESTED ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING SHIPS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING. PENDING OUR RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST, HE HAS STOPPED EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ASSISTANCE OR PURCHASE SHIPS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. I TOLD THE ADMIRAL THAT WE COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE WITH TRAINING, EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT SHIPS, AND SAID THAT I WOULD FORWARD HIS REQUEST TO MY GOVERNMENT AND SEEK ITS INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. ADMIRAL POVEDA CAME TO SEE ME JUNE 27 AT HIS REQUEST. AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES HE CAME TO THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED TO AMBASSADOR CARDENAS AND TO THE PRESIDENT AND THEY BOTH KNEW OF HIS VISIT AND THE PURPOSE. THE ADMIRAL SAID HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO ELABORATE AN OVERALL POLICY FOR THE NAVY. THERE HAD BEEN NO SUCH POLICY, JUST A NUMBER OF AD HOC DECISIONS, SOME OF THEM MUTUALLY CONTRADICTIONARY. HE AND HIS STAFF WERE
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NOW AGREED ON THE DESIRABILITY OF AN "OPENING TOWARD THE

UNITED STATES". WHILE THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT IN ACCORD WITH THIS DECISION, THE MAJORITY OF THE NAVY WAS.

3. THE ADMIRAL WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WOULD BE TO HAVE AN AMERICAN NAVAL MISSION COME TO ECUADOR IN JULY TO DISCUSS THE MODERNIZATION AND TRAINING OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVY (EN). HE WOULD ALSO LIKE THE SAME OR ANOTHER GROUP TO ASSIST HIM IN MAKING A DECISION ON WHERE TO LOCATE THE NAVAL BASE WHICH THEY ARE PLANNING TO BUILD. (THE THREE LOCATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION ARE SALINAS, NEAR ISLA SALONGO, AND NORTH OF MANTA.) IN SEPTEMBER, ADMIRAL POVEDA STATED, HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES TO DISCUSS MATTERS FURTHER WITH CNO HOLLOWAY. AFTER THAT HE PLANNED TO CONTINUE ON TO EUROPE TO INSPECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS ECUADOREAN NAVY SHIPS.

4. THE ADMIRAL SAID HE WAS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO LARGE EXPENDITURES FOR EQUIPMENT. HE SAID THE GOE COULD NOT HAVE A SITUATION IN WHICH THE ARMED FORCES WERE "SUCKING DRY THE COUNTRY"; THE FUNDS WERE NEEDED FOR DEVELOPMENT. WHILE HE REGRETTED CERTAIN PURCHASES MADE ABROAD (HE CLEARLY WAS REFERRING TO THE TWO SUBMARINES WHICH HIS PREDECESSOR PURCHASED IN GERMANY), HE COULD NOT TURN THE CLOCK BACK: POSSIBLY, HOWEVER, TRANSFERS COULD BE ARRANGED TO OTHER COUNTRIES. IN ANY EVENT, HE HAD STOPPED ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TWO FRIGATES WHICH WERE TO COST \$140,000,000 EACH, HAD GIVEN ORDERS THAT NO MORE SIZE-ABLE PURCHASES OF ANY KIND WERE TO BE MADE, AND HAD CANCELLED PLANS TO SEND A NAVY DELEGATION TO JAPAN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LAUNCHING OF A SHIP BEING BUILT FOR FLOPEC. IN SHORT, HE SAID, HE HAD "COMPLETELY STOPPED" EVERYTHING UNTIL HE KNEW THE RESULTS OF HIS APPROACH TO US.

5. THE ADMIRAL THEN OUTLINED SPECIFICALLY WHAT HE WAS THINKING ABOUT. WHAT HE WANTS IS THE FOLLOWING:

A. ACQUISITION OF TWO DESTROYERS OF THE GEARING CLASS OR LATER. HE WOULD PLAN TO USE ONE MORE OR LESS AS IS. THE
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OTHER WOULD BE EXTENSIVELY REHABILITATED AND UPDATED.

B. ACQUISITION OF A SMALL FLEET OILER.

C. ACQUISITION OF A HYDROGRAPHIC BOAT.

D. CONTINUE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE LST.

E. CONSTRUCTION OF A NAVAL BASE.

F. EQUIPMENT OF A MARINE INFANTRY GROUP OF SOME 1,000 TO 1,500 MEN.

G. COURSE OF TRAINING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS.

H. THE SENDING OF AN ECUADOREAN NAVAL MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES AND ITS MAINTENANCE THERE.

I. LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR THE FLEET UNITS THAT ARE PRESENTLY OPERATING.

J. THE ACQUISITION OF THE ABOVE NAMED SHIPS AND OF A SMALL NUMBER OF PLANES SO THAT THE EN COULD AGAIN PARTICIPATE IN UNITAS EXERCISES.

6. THE ADMIRAL'S PRESENTATION WAS MADE IN A CALM, LOW KEY MANNER WITHOUT THEATRICALS OR THREATS. WHEN HE HAD FINISHED, I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD ALWAYS PLACED A VERY HIGH PRIORITY ON RENEWING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE ECUADOREAN AND UNITED STATES NAVIES. THE LIFTING OF THE FMS IN EARLY 1974 HAD PERMITTED THE RESUMPTION OF TRAINING. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, HIS PREDECESSOR HAD TAKEN A STAND OF "ALL OR NOTHING", AND THE EN HAD NOT AVAILED ITSELF OF THE TRAINING. THE RESULT WAS THAT OVER A YEAR HAS BEEN LOST. WE WERE STILL ABLE TO GO FORWARD WITH TRAINING FOR THE EN, AND I WAS CONFIDENT THAT WITH HIS COOPERATION WE COULD PROCEED ON THAT. TURNING NEXT TO THE MATTER OF SHIPS, I SAID I ASSUMED HE WAS AWARE FROM HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR CARDENAS OF THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE LST. HE SAID HE WAS. WITH RESPECT TO THE DESTROYER WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CORRESPONDENCE, THE
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SITUATION AS I UNDERSTOOD WAS THIS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN AMENDMENT TO A LAW WHICH HAD BEEN PASSED LAST YEAR, ANY TRANSFER OF SUCH A SHIP HAD TO BE APPROVED BY THE CONGRESS. GIVEN THE SITUATION WHICH CURRENTLY EXISTED IN THE CONGRESS, THE REQUEST TO TRANSFER THE VESSEL HAD NOT IN FACT GONE FORWARD FROM THE NAVY TO THE CONGRESS. AS IN THE CASE OF THE LST, IT THUS WAS A QUESTION OF AWAITING FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

7. I TOLD THE ADMIRAL THAT I WAS ABOUT TO MAKE A BRIEF TRIP TO WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION. I WOULD DISCUSS THERE THE ISSUES WHICH HE HAD RAISED IN THE HOPE THAT I MIGHT HAVE SOME ANSWER OR ANSWERS UPON MY RETURN.

8. ADMIRAL POVEDA SAID THAT THIS WAS PERFECTLY AGREEABLE

TO HIM. HE REITERATED THE HOPE THAT HIS PROGRAM AS HE HAD
OUTLINED IT WOULD MEET WITH OUR APPROVAL. IF NOT, THEN
HE WOULD HAVE TO FIND SOME OTHER, OBVIOUSLY LESS DESIR-
ABLE, SOLUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EN.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: MY PLANS TO VISIT WASHINGTON HAVE
NOW BEEN CANCELLED. PLEASE ADVISE WHAT REPLY SHOULD BE
MADE TO ADMIRAL POVEDA.
BREWSTER

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